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THESIS

**DETERRENCE AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY
STRATEGY OF 2002:
A ROUND PEG FOR A ROUND HOLE**

by

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December 2003

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2002: A ROUND PEG FOR A ROUND HOLE**

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ABSTRACT

The National Security Strategy of 2002 suggests that the United States has determined that when faced with the threat of attacks from actors in possession of weapons of mass destruction, a strategy of deterrence is not appropriate. The prospect of absorbing another attack on the caliber of the attacks of September 11, 2001 is unacceptable. As a result, the United States must either abandon the strategy of deterrence for most security challenges or it must adopt a new concept of deterrence. This thesis suggests that the practice of a new concept of deterrence, in which the United States threatens punishment to an adversary for actions short of military attacks against the United States, would address security challenges across the spectrum of threats. Under this concept, preemptive attacks and preventive war constitute possible examples of deterrence failures. This thesis outlines the parameters of the new deterrence situation, the requirements for success in pursuing this strategy, and the challenges to its implementation.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The National Security Strategy of the United States of America of September 17, 2002 (NSS) received much attention when it was published a year after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The George W. Bush administration was faced with the challenges of confronting significant security threats from so-called rogue states and non-state actors, potentially employing terrorist tactics and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) against U.S. interests around the world and possibly directly against the U.S. homeland. While these threats were not new, the attacks of September 11 exposed a vulnerability of the United States that was recognized in principle prior to the attacks but believed to be somehow "out of bounds" for the foes of the United States. The realization that the U.S. homeland could be attacked, almost at will, by forces which could produce mass casualties caused the Bush administration to adjust its strategic security outlook such that the United States could reduce the likelihood of sustaining additional attacks similar to those of September 11.

The traditional notion of deterrence, as practiced by the United States during the decades following World War II, was considered to be perhaps out of date and inappropriate for confronting the types of security threats facing the United States in the 21st century. The Bush administration believed that while deterrence might be an appropriate strategy in some contemporary cases, the gravest threats facing the United States could not be

adequately addressed through a strategy of deterrence.¹ The characteristics of non-state actors made them problematic targets for deterrence, which was traditionally applied toward unitary state actors. States that were willing to use and share WMD likewise seemed poor candidates for a strategy of deterrence because the Bush administration was unwilling to sustain additional attacks of the caliber of the attacks of September 11; although traditional deterrence situations called for (perhaps massive) punishment in retaliation for an attack on the United States, the prospect of WMD attacks on the United States were considered totally unacceptable, even if the responsible party would be completely defeated in retaliation. As explained by President Bush,

For much of the last century, America's defense relied on the Cold War doctrines of deterrence and containment. In some cases, those strategies still apply. But new threats also require new thinking. Deterrence -- the promise of massive retaliation against nations -- means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks with no nation or citizens to defend. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorist allies.²

For these reasons, the NSS does not accord deterrence the primary role in U.S. security strategy.

The NSS reveals the Bush administration's bias for action against the potential foes of the United States.

¹ President of the United States, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," September 17, 2002: Preface; The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Remarks by the President at 2002 Graduation Exercise of the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, June 1, 2001 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/06/20020601-3.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

² The White House, Remarks by the President at 2002 Graduation Exercise of the United States Military Academy.

The elements of the NSS which received the most attention from observers were those which indicated that the United States would act preemptively and unilaterally, if necessary, to defeat threats to U.S. interests. The National Security Advisor, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, commented on the role of preemption, as opposed to deterrence and containment:

[Containment or deterrence] can and will continue to be employed where appropriate. But some threats are so potentially catastrophic -- and can arrive with so little warning, by means that are untraceable -- that they cannot be contained...And new technology requires new thinking about when a threat actually becomes "imminent." So as a matter of common sense, the United States must be prepared to take action, when necessary, before threats have fully materialized...The number of cases in which [this approach] might be justified will always be small. It does not give a green light -- to the United States or any other nation -- to act first without exhausting other means, including diplomacy. Preemptive action does not come at the beginning of a long chain of effort. The threat must be very grave. And the risks of waiting must far outweigh the risks of action.³

This thesis examines the role of deterrence within the framework of the NSS. Through a review of the Bush administration's strategic approach, the nature of threats in the current security environment, a survey of deterrence theory literature, and a contemporary example of a security challenge, this thesis concludes that the United States might be well-served by employing a new concept of deterrence for a variety of security challenges, including

³ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "Dr. Condoleezza Rice Discusses President's National Security Strategy," Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York, NY, October 1, 2002 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021001-6.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

cases of WMD threats from rogue states. Rather than reserving the strategy of deterrence for a few cases that might resemble the Cold War standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union, a new concept of deterrence might be applied across the spectrum of security challenges. This new concept of deterrence provides that the United States threaten action, including military action, to a foe in response to activity that the United States deems hostile or undesirable but is activity short of an actual attack against the United States or U.S. interests. Within this framework, the concepts of preemption and preventive war should be considered the threatened punishments to U.S. foes, delivered in cases of deterrence failures, rather than as fundamental departures from previous U.S. national security strategies.

Chapter II presents a brief interpretation of elements of the NSS and the Quadrennial Defense Review Report (QDR) that suggests that deterrence should still be very much a part of U.S. national security strategy. It is argued that the concepts of preemption and preventive war, as parts of the NSS, are encompassed by a new, broadened concept of deterrence and do not represent a fundamental departure from previous national security strategies.

Chapter III provides a presentation of several academic interpretations of deterrence. Commentary on the strengths and weaknesses of several deterrence theories leads to a suggestion regarding the best way to capture the new interpretation of deterrence within a conceptual framework that can be employed by U.S. policymakers. Finally, the concept of compellence is briefly addressed, as it is intimately related to the practice of a national strategy of deterrence.

Chapter IV scrutinizes the concept of deterrence developed in Chapters II and III. A series of potential pitfalls for the employment of deterrence is presented with recommendations for policymakers on the best way to proceed with a strategy of deterrence within the current security environment.

A case study is presented in Chapter V. The period between September 11, 2001 and March 20, 2003 is framed as a deterrence situation, concluding in a deterrence failure, in which the United States confronted Iraq's possession of WMD. The case study illustrates the manner in which deterrence can be employed, even against rogue states with WMD, and it shows the challenges that confront the United States in trying to employ a strategy of deterrence in the future.

Chapter VI concludes with lessons learned since September 11, 2001 and demonstrates the complexities and challenges of deterring other actors for the United States.

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CHAPTER II. DETERRENCE AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

A. DETERRENCE AND THE GEORGE W. BUSH ADMINISTRATION

Since the Bush administration did not produce a National Security Strategy document during its first year in office, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's QDR of September 30, 2001 serves as the first formal presentation of the administration's evaluation of the post-September 11 global security environment, of the objectives of the United States within that environment, and of the means by which the United States intends to address its security challenges. The QDR identifies four defense policy goals "to defend the nation and secure a viable peace."⁴ One of the policy goals is specifically deterrence of threats to national interests, but each of the four goals is related to a national strategy of deterrence. Interestingly, the NSS appears to value deterrence as only one among several tactics or as a favorable condition that might emerge as a byproduct of other U.S. actions, but it does not embrace deterrence as a national strategy. However, an interpretation of the document's intentions is that the NSS seeks to divorce the concept of deterrence from the mindset of mutual assured destruction (MAD), popularized during the Cold War, in favor of a new approach to deterrence that enables the strategy to address a variety of threats from a variety of actors; deterrence, outside the framework of MAD, is still a national strategy.

The reaction of John Lewis Gaddis is representative of the attitudes of myriad commentators on the NSS: "President

⁴ U.S. Secretary of Defense, "Quadrennial Defense Review Report," September 30, 2001: 11.

George W. Bush's national security strategy could represent the most sweeping shift in U.S. grand strategy since the beginning of the Cold War."⁵ The ideas within the NSS that spark this type of reaction generally relate to the document's bias for action when U.S. interests are threatened. The NSS advocates defeating or diffusing threats through the use of force preemptively, unilaterally if necessary, beyond U.S. borders, before threats are fully developed, particularly in facing the challenges of WMD and terrorism.⁶ Examples of this new method of guaranteeing U.S. security can be seen in the current military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and in the 2002 attack on *al Qaeda* leaders via unmanned aerial vehicle in Yemen. In addition to the general statements of U.S. interests and intentions found in the NSS, President Bush has also repeatedly issued general warnings in speeches to an unspecified global audience that the United States will not tolerate certain types of behavior, among which are state support for terrorism, state harboring of terrorists, and acquisition or proliferation of WMD. Also, in the Middle East, more specific warnings, regarding interference in Iraq's internal affairs and support for terrorist

⁵ John Lewis Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation," *Foreign Policy* 133 (November/December 2002): 50.

⁶ NSS, 5-7, 13-16. The term, *preemption*, suggests action designed to thwart an imminent enemy attack. I believe the Bush administration conceives of the concept of *preemption* in terms more similar to the concept of *preventive war*, in which action is taken against a foe that poses a threat through the possession of capabilities and/or hostile intentions yet is not about to attack. In the contemporary security environment, a rogue state's possession of WMD might provoke a U.S. attack, even though there is little or no evidence that the rogue state was planning an attack on the United States. This example might be categorized as a case of *preventive war*, but I believe the Bush administration might categorize the case as *preemption*. While acknowledging ambiguity in the definition of *preemption*, I have attempted to not use the term interchangeably with *preventive war*.

organizations, have recently been administered to Syria and Iran with promises of grave consequences for failure to comply.

The general statements of intent found in the NSS and uttered by President Bush and the recent U.S. military activity are setting the stage for the practice of the new concept of deterrence identified vaguely in the NSS and QDR. This current concept of deterrence is not a fundamental departure from existing theories of deterrence, but it tends to require a broader definition. A study of deterrence theories *vis á vis* an evaluation of current U.S. policy might help to better direct U.S. political and military efforts to accomplish national goals and to protect national interests through a minimal application of force.

B. PARAMETERS FOR A NEW U.S. CONCEPT OF DETERRENCE

The NSS expresses the Bush administration's doubt that traditional concepts of deterrence will be an effective means of addressing the current security environment in which the greatest immediate threats to U.S. interests lie in unconventional, asymmetric attacks by terrorist enemies and rogue states, especially when these enemies wield WMD. The fault in traditional concepts of deterrence that is identified in the NSS is the ineffectiveness of the reactive posture of retaliation in response to attacks on U.S. interests. The Bush administration's evaluation of the "terrorist enemy" and the leaders of rogue states is that their apparent willingness to die, to take great risks, and to gamble with the lives of their people and the wealth of their nations makes these adversaries less probable to succumb to any U.S. threats of retaliation. The possibility that a WMD attack by these adversaries

would result in massive civilian casualties causes the Bush administration to search for a new concept of deterrence that promises the prevention of an attack with greater certainty; the consequences of a traditional deterrence failure, in which an attack is sustained by the United States before it responds, are unacceptable to the Bush administration, considering the deadliness of WMD and in light of the terrorist attacks of September 11.⁷

1. Deterrence by Punishment

The NSS states the willingness of the United States to act preemptively, "[to take] anticipatory action to defend ourselves."⁸ The United States "[recognizes] that our best defense is a good offense."⁹ While the concept of preemption may be considered a radical departure from previous U.S. security strategies, preemption is actually related to deterrence by punishment, a concept whereby some type of harm is promised an opponent that fails to comply with U.S. demands;¹⁰ the United States is offering a threat of military and/or other action to any state or organization (but specifically to rogue states and terrorist organizations) which contemplates, plans, seeks to acquire the means, or acquires the means of attacking the United States or its interests, particularly with WMD. The conditions under which the United States will deliver punishment fall short of an actual attack on the United States or its interests, constituting a deviation from most

⁷ Ibid, 14-15.

⁸ Ibid, 15.

⁹ Ibid, 6.

¹⁰ David E. Johnson, Karl P. Mueller and William H. Taft, V, *Conventional Coercion across the Spectrum of Operations: The Utility of U.S. Military Forces in the Emerging Security Environment* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2002), 16.

theories of deterrence, which provide for punishment only in the case of an actual attack.

The QDR addresses the means by which preemption, or the new concept of deterrence by punishment, may be viewed as a credible capability. Within the defense policy goal of "detering threats and coercion against U.S. interests," the QDR states an intent to "provide the President with a wider range of military options," specifically including enhanced capabilities in forward deployed forces and improved intelligence capabilities.¹¹ The goal to "deter forward" will allow intelligence assets to provide U.S. forces, but more importantly the National Command Authorities (NCA), with "critical information on adversaries' intentions, plans, strengths, and weaknesses."¹² The forward deployed forces will provide a capability to strike rapidly, flexibly and accurately, giving the NCA a variety of retaliatory options across the spectrum of violence and destruction, should deterrence fail. This ability to decisively defeat any adversary constitutes a second defense policy goal.¹³ Additionally, the goal to deter forward includes security cooperation with allies and friends (which is a critical part of a third defense policy goal of "assuring allies and friends"¹⁴) in order to enhance military and intelligence capabilities in the face of a threat;¹⁵ security cooperation and efforts to enhance collective security measures can serve to add weight to deterrent threats that might

¹¹ QDR, 12.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid, 13.

¹⁴ Ibid, 11.

¹⁵ Ibid, 20.

otherwise include only unilateral action.¹⁶

"Operationalizing" the concept of deter forward allows the United States to determine when it might be threatened, to surmise the intentions of its foe, to assess the best way to threaten the foe, to determine the best way to communicate the threat, to provide a capable and credible threat, and to punish the foe should deterrence fail.

2. Deterrence by Denial

The NSS identifies other elements of U.S. strategy that can be interpreted as deterrence by denial, a concept whereby the United States seeks to convince its opponent that attempts to attack U.S. interests will be unsuccessful.¹⁷ U.S. deterrence by denial works in conjunction with deterrence by punishment. Although there is little doubt that the Bush administration views the prospect of another successful attack on the magnitude of the attacks of September 11 as unacceptable, there seems to be an acknowledgement that no effort at defense or deterrence by punishment can be expected to stave off all attacks. The U.S. strategy of deterrence by denial works to show potential adversaries that no attack launched on the United States or its interests will succeed in defeating the country to any degree. Maintaining the most powerful armed forces in the world is a means of deterring conventional attacks by denial. The NSS states that no adversaries seek to attack the United States using conventional means; "they know such attacks would fail."¹⁸ Similarly, the United States attempts deterrence by denial

¹⁶ Michael P. C. Carns, "Reopening the Deterrence Debate: Thinking about a Peaceful and Prosperous Tomorrow," in Max G. Manwaring, ed., *Deterrence in the 21st Century* (Portland: Frank Cass, 2001), 9.

¹⁷ Johnson, Mueller and Taft, 16-17.

¹⁸ NSS, 15.

by tasking its armed forces to be able to identify and destroy threats before they reach U.S. borders;¹⁹ establishing the capability to stop an attack before it reaches its target serves to deter the attack in the first place. Not only does the United States seek to maintain a powerful military as a means of deterrence by denial and as a tool of compellence and deterrence by punishment, but a fourth defense policy goal is to ensure that the United States remains dominant globally and free from any future military competition, aiding in deterrence over the very long term.²⁰ In another instance of deterrence by denial, the NSS states, "we are also strengthening America's homeland security to protect against and deter attack."²¹ Specifically, consequence management to respond to the effects of a WMD attack serves as deterrence by denial: "Minimizing the effects of WMD use against our people will help deter those who possess such weapons and dissuade those who seek to acquire them by persuading enemies that they cannot attain their desired ends."²² The proposition of Paul Davis and Brian Michael Jenkins regarding an aversion of terrorists for operational risk might also be applied to state actors: "they may be willing to risk or give their lives, but not in futile attacks."²³ U.S. deterrence by denial seeks to maximize the perception of futility of potential attacks on the United States and its interests.

¹⁹ Ibid, 6.

²⁰ QDR, 12.

²¹ NSS, 6.

²² Ibid, 14.

²³ Paul K. Davis and Brian Michael Jenkins, *Deterrence and Influence in Counterterrorism: A Component in the War on al Qaeda* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2002), 16.

3. Compellence

The concept of compellence is generally accepted to be separate from the concept of deterrence, but it is related to deterrence in that a particular, undesirable behavior of an adversary is expected to change in response to a U.S. pledge of action. In the framework of the NSS, those hostile states and organizations that possess WMD, proliferate WMD, practice terrorism or support terrorism in any way are given notice that the United States will not tolerate that behavior and demands a stop to it. The soundness of demanding that a terrorist organization end its practice of terrorism may be questionable, but the method of compellence is easily comprehensible. The United States commits itself to "direct and continuous action using all the elements of national and international power."²⁴ In other words, the United States will continue to inflict punishment until its potential adversaries no longer pursue terrorism or WMD. As addressed further in Chapter III, compellence is not synonymous with deterrence, nor are its assumptions regarding the initiation of action the same;²⁵ however, the fact that some international actors are already engaged in behavior that the United States has declared unacceptable in the NSS requires that compellence serve as a companion strategy to deterrence in order to accomplish U.S. objectives regarding terrorism and WMD.

4. Positive Deterrence

Positive deterrence involves the use of incentives or rewards, rather than threats or punishment, to persuade compliance with U.S. demands.²⁶ Although positive

²⁴ NSS, 6.

²⁵ Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 69-71.

²⁶ Johnson, Mueller and Taft, 16.

deterrence is not directly mentioned in the NSS, the strategy still resides in the "toolbox" of U.S. policy makers. Positive deterrence might be employed with those states that could be involved in support for terrorism or in WMD proliferation but indicate a willingness to alter their behavior due to concern over the U.S. stance on the policies or the policies' relative insignificance in overall state strategy. As an example from the post-September 11 period, it might be argued that Pakistan was enticed to end its support for the Taliban in Afghanistan and join the United States in the "war on terrorism" in 2001 through the U.S. practice of positive deterrence; as a result of the change in Pakistani policy, President Bush signed legislation that ended sanctions and renewed economic and military aid to Pakistan on October 30, 2001.²⁷ Positive deterrence can be most effective for the United States when combined with other methods of deterrence; not only was Pakistan rewarded for its change of policy, but it was also indirectly threatened through a statement of President Bush:

And we will pursue nations that provide aid or safe haven to terrorism. Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime.²⁸

C. SUMMARY

In sum, the new U.S. strategy of deterrence includes a combination of deterrence by punishment, deterrence by denial, compellence and positive deterrence. The concept

²⁷ Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Pakistan," *The Middle East Journal* 56 (Spring 2002): 315.

²⁸ President George W. Bush, Address to a Joint Session of Congress, Washington, DC, September 20, 2001.

of preemption constitutes the establishment of new parameters for deterrence by punishment, rather than a fundamental departure from the concept of deterrence. A preemptive strike by the United States represents the failure of a deterrence situation in which the threat of a U.S. attack was the deterrent pledge of action and the activity of the opponent that the United States attempted to deter was something short of actual, overtly aggressive action or an attack on the United States; in the current deterrence situation, the United States pledges military or other action if an opponent fails to comply with the U.S. demand to avoid the use or support of terrorism and the use or acquisition of WMD. The U.S. Department of Defense is pursuing four defense policy goals, all of which contribute to the NCA's ability to practice deterrence with the leverage of effective military means, but U.S. pledges of action in deterrence efforts are not always necessarily military in nature.

CHAPTER III. FRAMING THE NEW CONCEPT OF DETERRENCE

A. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACTORS IN DETERRENCE

A review of literature on deterrence theories unveils numerous definitions of the concept and even more proposals of the confines in which the concept should be studied. Since the United States intends to practice deterrence rather than study it, a useful, workable model of deterrence theory should probably be based on a well-understood fusion of ideas surrounding a broad definition of the concept.

Several theorists begin their presentations of deterrence theory with a description of the conditions surrounding the relationship between two parties that may come into conflict. For example, Patrick Morgan identifies manipulation via threat as the essence of deterrence:

"Deterrence involves manipulating someone's behavior by threatening him with harm."²⁹ However, most theorists then narrow their definitions of deterrence for the purpose of study. Morgan shifts to a concept in which "deterrence involves the threat to use force in response as a way of preventing the first use of force by someone else."³⁰

Before concentrating on the use of force as a prerequisite for a definition of deterrence, however, the relationship between opposing actors should be better defined.

Especially for the U.S. attempt to employ a new concept of deterrence, the establishment of the nature of competition between opposing wills is the most important factor in defining a strategy of deterrence.

²⁹ Patrick M. Morgan, *Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977), 9.

³⁰ Ibid.

The manipulation of an opponent's decision making is probably a suitable base for a consideration of deterrence. Many studies of deterrence incorporate the opponent's cost-benefit analysis as an integral part of the deterrence relationship. Alexander George and Richard Smoke provide a description of this relationship that appears, with minor variations, in much of the literature: deterrence involves "persuasion of one's opponent that the costs and/or risks of a given course of action he might take outweigh its benefits."³¹ The object is to increase the inherent costs of an action for the opponent to the point at which he determines that it is not in his best interest to pursue that action. The costs are increased for the opponent by a U.S. pledge of some type of action, most often, but not necessarily, the threat of the use of force against something of value to the opponent. The relationship can be represented as, "If you do A, the United States will do B,"³² with the U.S. intention of making its opponent conclude that B is more costly than A is beneficial.

Deterrence takes place in the mind of the opponent, not in any physical application of national power. Deterrence is a state of mind in which the opponent chooses to be deterred. "An enemy who chooses to be deterred is an enemy who chooses to subordinate his will to ours."³³ Since the opponent has an independent will and values objectives and interests of which the United States can never be

³¹ Alexander L. George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 11.

³² Johnson, Mueller and Taft, 14.

³³ Colin S. Gray, "Deterrence and the Nature of Strategy," in Manwaring, 18, 20.

certain, the United States can make no pledge of action that will be assured of deterring its opponent.

The method by which a model of deterrence supposes that an opponent might conclude that subordinating his will to that of the United States is in his best interest is through a rational decision making process. The assumption of deterrence is that the opponent will consider the costs and benefits of pursuing his original intentions, in light of the pledge of action from the United States, and his decision for action or inaction will be based on that course he deems to be most beneficial and/or least costly. Mutual deterrence might take place when, upon exchanging threats over a single issue, both the United States and its opponent determine that the least costly or most beneficial course of action is to subordinate the goals of each to the more favorable prospect of a *status quo* peace.

The assumption of rationality is a point which several deterrence theorists find problematic. One problem is that a poor understanding of an opponent may lead to a poor understanding of what constitutes a rational decision on its part. For example, a national leader might value the personal pride he finds in defying the United States more than the preservation of his life, but the United States might view this value system as irrational. Another problem is simply being able to identify an opponent as rational or not. Past rational behavior does not indicate that an actor will behave rationally in the future, nor does past irrationality indicate future irrationality. Additionally, a distinction should be drawn between rational decision-making and the rationality of an opponent's objectives; an opponent could have a completely irrational objective (or an objective that the United

States perceives to be irrational) but still make a rational decision based on costs and benefits.³⁴ While it may be assumed that there exist some crazy or completely irrational actors in the international system, most actors probably consider the consequences of their actions to some degree prior to acting. Morgan suggests that no one is capable of perfect rationality when faced with a situation of "threat and reaction, a complex psychological phenomenon with obvious roots in the emotional equipment of man," so parties to deterrence should be expected to make "sensible" decisions, with some influence from irrational objectives and perceptions.³⁵ Deterrence does not require complete, pure rationality in decision making; it only requires that the decision maker not be completely irrational.³⁶

A good deal of literature on deterrence presents a relationship between only two opposing parties. George and Smoke suggest that the polarization of the deterrence relationship grew out of the bipolarity of the Cold War and the academic emphasis on nuclear deterrence.³⁷ However, deterrence relationships can exist between multiple parties, as in the cases of extended deterrence, whereby a U.S. pledge of action deters an opponent's action against a tertiary interest, friend or ally³⁸ (for example, the U.S. pledge to defend Saudi Arabia might have been a case of successful extended deterrence against Iraq in 1990). The same is true of general deterrence, whereby the United States might issue a threat to a general audience of

³⁴ Robert H. Dorff and Joseph R. Cerami, "Deterrence and Competitive Strategies: A New Look at an Old Concept," in Manwaring, 111.

³⁵ Morgan, 13, 78.

³⁶ Johnson, Mueller and Taft, 17.

³⁷ George and Smoke, 32.

³⁸ Johnson, Mueller and Taft, 12.

unspecified opponents that might threaten a generally specified interest. Examples include, President Carter's statement that

any attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force,³⁹

or the statement of President Bush before a Joint Session of Congress in 2001 (quoted on page 15 of this thesis).

In sum, for the new U.S. concept of deterrence, an understanding of the deterrence relationship should include the following factors:

- The United States must pledge action against something of value to an opponent to cause it to conclude through a costs and benefits analysis that subordinating its will to that of the United States is more beneficial to it than defying the United States.
- An opponent must choose to be deterred. Successfully persuading it to subordinate its will to the U.S. will requires an understanding of its values and objectives.
- Pure rationality in the decision making of an opponent is not required for deterrence, only a lack of complete irrationality.
- Deterrence need not always concern a relationship between only two parties.

B. THE SCOPE OF DETERRENCE

Nuclear deterrence has been addressed as a subject distinct from conventional deterrence for ease of study and because of the scale of destruction at stake in a nuclear

³⁹ President Jimmy Carter, State of the Union Address, January 23, 1980.

exchange. Today, however, the lack of a superpower standoff, the questionable intentions of smaller nuclear powers, and the advances in conventional weaponry might cause the two subjects to be conceptually closer than during the Cold War. Gary Guertner argues that the current superiority of the U.S. armed forces allows it to be used as a much more fearsome deterrent threat than ever before. Particularly, technological advances give U.S. conventional forces the range, accuracy, survivability, lethality and ability to strike a wide spectrum of targets, making them possess essentially the same qualities as nuclear weapons without the moral abhorrence accompanying their use.⁴⁰ Additionally, while facing a security environment of uncertain threats and potential enemies armed with WMD, U.S. nuclear forces may be used as a deterrent threat in conjunction with U.S. conventional forces, offering a variety of military options to rapidly meet any security challenge, under generally the same planning framework as the Cold War strategy of flexible response.⁴¹

The specific circumstances concerning the substance of threats and the exchange of threats between parties lead to disparities between the works of many seemingly like-minded deterrence theorists. John Mearsheimer restricts the conditions of conventional deterrence to those situations in which the seizure of territory is the action to be deterred.⁴² Under those parameters, an attempt by Israel to use threats of retaliation to dissuade Iran from launching

⁴⁰ Gary L. Guertner, "Deterrence and Conventional Military Forces," in Manwaring, 61.

⁴¹ U.S. Secretary of Defense, "Nuclear Posture Review," January 8, 2002: 12-15.

⁴² John J. Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), Chapter 1.

missiles at Tel Aviv does not constitute a deterrence situation. Mearsheimer also only includes those situations in which the exchange of threats by two parties concern a military confrontation on a battlefield, so the threat of guerilla warfare is outside the scope of deterrence.⁴³ Mearsheimer further restricts his definition by confining the exchange of threats to military targets.⁴⁴ Under those conditions, a threat to terrorize a population through saturation bombing does not constitute a deterrent threat. In a vein similar to Mearsheimer but more inclusive, Morton Halperin confines deterrence to the use of military force to prevent military action of an adversary.⁴⁵

Conversely George and Smoke observe that in modern times, deterrence increasingly concerns the ability to punish the enemy while leaving its military intact and deterrence in situations outside of nuclear confrontations is dominated by political and diplomatic concerns much more than by tactical military concerns.⁴⁶ Rather than limiting the scope of deterrence to military threats, pledges of action other than military, such as economic sanctions or international isolation via proposals for punitive United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs), might be used as deterrents as well.⁴⁷ By extension, the opponent's potential action that causes deterrence to be necessary might also be a threat other than a pending military attack. As a contemporary example of an other than military deterrence situation, the United States might

⁴³ Ibid, 15.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 23.

⁴⁵ Morton Halperin, *Defense Strategies for the Seventies* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 10.

⁴⁶ George and Smoke, 21, 51.

⁴⁷ Glenn H. Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 9-10.

level a threat of suspending aid or invoking trade sanctions against a state that has expressed sympathy for and might offer assistance to *al Qaeda*. Paul Huth and Bruce Russett propose the additional facet of positive deterrence through making use of both carrot and stick; they suggest that promises of rewards for compliance can be offered or combined with threats of punishment to help make defiance of U.S. will less attractive.⁴⁸

In defining the concept in academic terms, many scholars restrict deterrence to state versus state competition, with an understanding that the state is a unitary actor. These confines were set in earlier decades when states were the only actors of significance in the international system that could threaten each other with significant harm. In writing about nuclear deterrence in 1968, Roy Jones observed that

the penalties involved can only be applied by possessors of nuclear weapons and these are the authorities of nation-states. At some time in the future this situation may change, but such a development is as yet unlikely.⁴⁹

Today's security environment has changed. The physical threats of nuclear and conventional warfare are joined by cyber-war, WMD and asymmetric attacks of varying types, and the threatening actors have increased from only nation-states to include terrorists, insurgents, drug traffickers, organized crime, warlords, and religious extremists.⁵⁰ Despite some actors' lack of geographic borders and military facilities, the United States can still attempt to

⁴⁸ Paul Huth and Bruce Russett, "Testing Deterrence Theory: Rigor Makes a Difference," *World Politics* 42 (July 1990): 470.

⁴⁹ Roy E. Jones, *Nuclear Deterrence: A Short Political Analysis* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1968), 7.

⁵⁰ Carns, in Manwaring, 8.

deter them from specific actions; intelligence and targeting may be more difficult, but all these actors most likely have something they hold as valuable that the United States might threaten. As Michael Carns recommends, the United States must adopt a broad strategy of deterrence for "the Russian bear, Asian Dragons, and 1,000 snakes."⁵¹ All targets of U.S. deterrence strategy also do not have to be considered unitary actors; as Davis and Jenkins suggest about terrorist organizations,⁵² non-state actors might be considered as systems with many component parts that might be targeted individually. Similarly, a detailed understanding of a nation-state's power bases and decision-making process might allow component parts, such as military leadership, political parties, merchant elites, or religious leaders, to be the targets of U.S. deterrent threats.

Many scholars agree that a central presumption in deterrence is that the pledge of action is delivered only in response to the attack or action of the opponent.⁵³ In other words, under more traditional concepts of deterrence, the United States would pledge action (for example, the bombing of the opponent's air bases) that would be executed only after the United States had absorbed the initial strikes of the enemy's attack. Furthermore, the pending action by the opponent is often assumed to be, if not imminent (as in the case of immediate deterrence), then likely or inevitable (as in the case of general deterrence). Art and Waltz frame deterrence as a means to prevent an attack that would come in the absence of the

⁵¹ Ibid, 15.

⁵² Davis and Jenkins, Chapter 3.

⁵³ Morgan, 21.

deterrent threat.⁵⁴ Success in deterrence would be marked by the opponent's decision to not attack as well as the absence of the pledged U.S. attack. Under the present conditions in which the United States is unwilling to take the chance that an attack similar to the attacks of September 11 will come at all, the United States seeks to deter not only attacks that would come in the absence of deterrence, based on a knowledge of the opponent's intentions, but also attacks that might come, based only on the capability of the opponent. A U.S. attack on an opponent due to the opponent's possession of a threatening capability, such as WMD, meets a definition of preventive war: "[Preventive war] is a calculated attempt by [the United States] to destroy country B's military forces, not because B *has* aggressed but because B *might* aggress and *might* use its weapons" (emphasis added).⁵⁵ However, under a new U.S. concept of deterrence, the above-described preventive war could simply represent the consequences of a deterrence failure in which the United States specifically informed country B that it would be attacked if it acquired specified weapons, such as WMD.

In sum, various scholars have put limits on the definition of deterrence for ease of study and clarity of communication, but the conception of deterrence that provides the United States with the most flexibility in confronting a wide variety of threats from a wide variety of actors should be very broad and consider the following:

- Considering today's threat environment and the technological advances of conventional weaponry,

⁵⁴ R. J. Art and K. N. Waltz, *The Use of Force* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 6.

⁵⁵ Jones, 22.

nuclear deterrence should not be considered a strategy separate from other deterrence. Nuclear weapons have a place on a continuum of U.S. force to be used in deterrence failures, and some conventional weaponry might have the effect of being just as fearful or punishing as exclusively nuclear weapons were in the past. Of course, considering the taboo on the use of nuclear weapons both among the U.S. population and in the international arena, their use in deterrence failures must be carefully weighed to ensure that the benefits of use are greater than the costs.

- Any U.S. pledge of action in response to an undesirable activity of an opponent constitutes a deterrent effort. The U.S. pledge of action could entail the leveraging of military, diplomatic, political, economic or informational power in the form of a punishment, instrument of denial, or reward. The undesirable activity of an opponent could be a conventional or nuclear military attack, terrorist attack, or WMD attack, but it need not be an attack at all; the undesirable activity could be anything identified by the United States as undesirable, such as acquisition of WMD or the precursor materials, providing financial or materiel support for terrorists, or engaging in the training of terrorists.
- Nation-states need not be the only opponents targeted through U.S. deterrence efforts.
- U.S. adversaries might be targeted for deterrence as unitary actors, or the component parts of the actors' "system" might be targeted individually.

- The necessity of executing the action pledged by the United States constitutes a deterrence failure. The action pledged is executed in response to a failure to comply with the U.S. will. The United States is responsible for defining its will to its opponent in advance. The U.S. will in a deterrence situation need not be limited to a desire to not be attacked by its opponent; the U.S. will might be to limit its opponent's capabilities by ensuring its opponent does not possess the precursor materials for WMD.
- A U.S. action that might be labeled preemption or preventive war can represent a deterrence failure, but only if the pledge of the "preemptive" attack had been communicated in advance and tied to a particular behavior of the opponent.

C. THE COMPANION STRATEGY OF COMPELLENCE

The primary threats identified in the NSS are terrorism and WMD. The United States seeks to influence the global security environment in such a way as to remove these threats. The new strategy of deterrence might be effective in preventing opponents from acquiring WMD, from supporting terrorism and from practicing terrorism, but deterrence cannot prevent something that has already happened; several actors today possess WMD or the precursor materials, and several actors today support terrorism. Reversing a state's action requires compellence.

Deterrence is basically a passive strategy. Action is only executed by the United States if deterrence fails. The initiative lies with the opponent;⁵⁶ it decides whether or not to act. Compellence is an active strategy. The

⁵⁶ Schelling, 70.

concept might be represented as, "until you do A, the United States will continue to do B," or as, "unless you do A by my deadline, I will do B."⁵⁷ Compellence requires that the initiative lie with the United States; the United States decides to act to induce a change of behavior in an opponent. While the United States could be bluffing when issuing pledges of action to an opponent in a deterrence situation, the sincerity and commitment of the United States is more evident in compellence because the United States has to be the first to act, and in order for the action to succeed in compelling the opponent, the action presumably cannot cease until the opponent responds.⁵⁸

Compellence, like deterrence, requires at least a degree of rationality in an opponent in that it is expected to weigh the costs and benefits of continuing a particular behavior. The United States seeks to persuade its opponent to conclude that, faced with the prospect of enduring the U.S. action directed against it, the value of abandoning a course of action is greater than the value of continuing a course of action. Also as in deterrence, the "something" that is targeted in compellence must be valuable to the opponent, actors other than nation-states can be the opponents targeted for compellence, the opponents do not have to be targeted as unitary actors, and the action taken by the United States does not necessarily have to involve the use of military force.

While there are many challenges and potential pitfalls involved in practicing deterrence, compellence is considered much more difficult to achieve because of the psychological and political costs of reversing an "attack;"

⁵⁷ Johnson, Mueller and Taft, 14.

⁵⁸ Schelling, 70-72.

it is presumed to be much easier to live without a desirable thing than it is to surrender that thing.⁵⁹

D. INTEGRATING THE NEW CONCEPT OF DETERRENCE INTO THE NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

The Bush administration has taken the stance that deterrence will not be effective in meeting all the challenges of today's security environment. Even within the confines of the more predictable, bipolar security environment of the Cold War, it is worth noting that the more traditional concepts of deterrence were admittedly far from able to guarantee success. Even with today's expansion in variety of threats and potentially threatening actors, however, deterrence might serve as one effective strategy for securing U.S. interests in many cases.

The recommended broadened conception of deterrence allows the United States to confront, through deterrence, a wide spectrum of opponents, from long-established nation-states to shadowy terrorist organizations, that might threaten the United States via a wide spectrum of harm, from a nuclear attack to a more limited asymmetric strike of a perhaps never before experienced nature. The new U.S. concept of deterrence includes deterrence by punishment, deterrence by denial, and positive deterrence. Due to the perceived necessity of reversing some existing threats, compellence, a companion strategy of coercion, should be employed along with deterrence. The United States might employ military, economic, diplomatic, political or informational power as its pledged coercive action to influence its opponents.

The broadened concept of deterrence also accommodates the Bush administration's apparent bias for action in

⁵⁹ Johnson, Mueller and Taft, 14.

meeting threats before the United States absorbs additional catastrophic attacks of the caliber of the attacks of September 11. Preventive war and preemption remain concepts distinct from deterrence, but the U.S. construction of a series of diplomatic tripwires allows the actions involved in preventive war and preemption to be used as deterrent threats to potential adversaries. The deterrence relationship does not change due to a threat of preventive war, only the opponent's contingent action changes. The "line in the sand" has been redrawn closer to the opponent than to the United States; the deterrence situation is still represented by "if you do A, the United States will do B," but today the United States has communicated that A may now be defined as the acquisition of a capability (for example) rather than as an attack on the United States.

The NSS was published a year after the QDR, but the QDR is still a supporting document to the NSS. As a *national* strategy, deterrence is not practiced by the Department of Defense; it is practiced by the *nation*. The Department of Defense has set defense policy goals for itself, which facilitate the practice of deterrence, and is formulating the concept of "deter forward," but the Department of Defense is only a deterrent tool. Defense policy serves the national strategy. "Success in deterrence cannot be reduced to buying more, or better, military forces, to superior intelligence, to genius in command, to competence in logistics,"⁶⁰ but all these Department of Defense capabilities and activities set the conditions of understanding U.S. opponents and lending

⁶⁰ Gray, in Manwaring, 21.

credibility to U.S. threats which are essential for successful deterrence. Furthermore, the Department of Defense might set "deterrence" as a goal, but it must be recognized that "we do not just *deter*; rather, we deter *someone* from doing *something*." As such, the NSS, not the QDR, should be viewed as the primary document to understand the U.S. strategy of deterrence.

The United States will be well served by working under a very broad concept of deterrence, but the establishment of a deterrent relationship with an opponent is reliant on clearly communicated, credible, contingent pledges of action, not just on the forward presence of armed forces. Recent events have proven that the U.S. maintenance of the most powerful military in the world does not serve as a deterrent in itself. The identification of the methods by which the new strategy of deterrence should be employed will bring to light the numerous challenges inherent in any strategy of deterrence, but more particularly, the challenges of confronting a wide variety of actors in today's security environment. An examination of the essential elements in deterrence of knowledge of the opponent, identification of what to target, determination of the best means of targeting it, clear communication of the threat across cultural barriers, possession of the capability, and conveyance of credibility will show the significant obstacles that the United States must overcome in implementing the new concept of deterrence successfully and will validate the Bush administration's concern that deterrence cannot always work in today's security environment.

CHAPTER IV. CHALLENGES FOR IMPLEMENTING A NEW CONCEPT OF DETERRENCE

Deterrence is by no means a foolproof strategy. It is even extremely difficult to identify historic cases of deterrence failures or successes because the political and strategic dynamics that cause a state to follow a particular course of action cannot be accurately assessed in the absence of testimony from the decision makers. Without turning to interviews, speeches or memoirs (which may or may not be truthful or complete) to determine the thought process of decision makers, the assessed reason that a state backed down or continued with a planned attack when faced with a deterrent threat may likely be inaccurate. For example, it is nearly impossible to determine if in October 1994, Iraq's failure to attack Kuwait can be considered a deterrence success on the part of the United States, which deployed troops in response to Iraqi massing of troops in southern Iraq under Operation Vigilant Warrior, or if Iraq never intended to attack Kuwait in the first place, making the U.S. deterrent threat irrelevant, or if Saddam Hussein's decision not to attack Kuwait was made with almost no regard for the U.S. deterrent threat. Because deterrence is a difficult subject to study, there is no formula for assured success. However, an examination of interstate relations suggests that particular challenges face the United States in its attempt to persuade others to avoid activities that might threaten U.S. interests.

A. INTELLIGENCE

The strategic concept of "deter forward" includes an emphasis on intelligence capabilities that is absolutely

vital to successful deterrence. The goal of intelligence needs to be much broader than the stated focus on "adversaries' intentions, plans, strengths, and weaknesses"⁶¹ however. In addition to information about strengths and weaknesses of all elements of an opponent's national power and how it might employ it, intelligence about the opponent must include an intimate, wide-spanning understanding of the opponent's culture, decision-making process and value structure.⁶² This understanding allows U.S. policy makers to choose the right target for deterrence, to predict what policy options will be viable for the opponent, to grasp how the opponent will calculate its costs versus benefits,⁶³ and to realize that while the opponent's decision making may be rational, its goals might seem completely unrealizable.

1. Capabilities versus Intentions

Having focus on an opponent's intentions more than on its capabilities is important for the United States deterrence effort. A consideration of only an opponent's capabilities can lead to a situation in which all foreign militaries are viewed as threats by the United States. An acknowledgement of the importance of intentions allows the United States to relieve itself of the burden of planning for a military confrontation with non-aggressive states that have significant military capabilities such as Great Britain, for example. Intelligence gathering on intentions of potential foes gives policy makers a better understanding of its opponents so that they are able to determine which opponents constitute realistic threats.

⁶¹ QDR, 12.

⁶² Colin S. Gray, *Maintaining Effective Deterrence* (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2003), 30.

⁶³ Johnson, Mueller and Taft, 12.

The United States has not yet moved away from its focus on national capabilities that dominated the deterrence equation during the Cold War. As outlined in Chapter II, the QDR states that the United States intends to ensure that it remains free from any future military competition.⁶⁴ While this defense policy goal will help serve to guarantee U.S. security through periods of uncertain political tide changes for the foreseeable future, it focuses on the capabilities, not intentions, of friends and foes alike. Defense planning that ensures the indefinite dominance of the U.S. military as a stand-alone force has the effect of serving as an instrument of deterrence by denial, but it also has the potential effect of instilling fear in countries which, in the absence of a dominating U.S. military, might not view the United States as a foe. Potentially benign state actors, instead of seeing the United States as a country which is only trying to benevolently safeguard its global interests, might view the U.S. military dominance of the international arena as a direct threat to their own national interests; a potential result is a military escalation, described well by Robert Jervis or Charles L. Glaser, as the spiral model.⁶⁵ The maintenance of a globally deploying, peerless U.S. military can cause insecurity in states that otherwise might have no dispute with the United States; out of insecurity in the face of a regionally intrusive U.S. military, a potential foe may feel the need to build up its own defenses, an

⁶⁴ QDR, 12.

⁶⁵ For a thorough treatment of the spiral model, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); and Charles L. Glaser, "Political Consequences of Military Strategy: Expanding and Refining the Spiral and Deterrence Models," *World Politics* 44 (July 1992): 497-538.

activity which the United States will view as threatening and aggressive, causing the United States to become confrontational, causing the potential foe to grow confrontational in turn, *et cetera*. In effect, the foe's attempt to decrease its insecurity as a result of the perceived threat of the U.S. military may actually drive it to acquire WMD to make it less vulnerable. It is very important, therefore, that in deciding to follow a strategy of deterrence, the United States ensures that not only does its targeted foe possess the capabilities to harm U.S. interests, but it also possesses the intentions. U.S. intelligence would also be useful if it can determine whether any ill intentions of an adversary might solely be the result of the adversary's insecurity in the face of U.S. capabilities or policies.

Additionally, according to the NSS, the Bush administration views the acquisition of WMD or WMD precursor materials by potential foes as threats to U.S. national security. As such, the Bush administration is again focusing on capabilities rather than on intentions. While there is no denying that in the hands of malicious parties, WMD could be used for catastrophic effects against U.S. targets, the effort to deter all states from acquiring WMD is enormous and necessarily rather unfocused in terms of the deterrence of a particular target with a particular threat. General deterrence might be employed as a strategy, but since the U.S. concern centers on a capability rather than an intention or action, that general deterrent threat will almost certainly lack consistency of response by the United States, degrading the credibility of the threat. For example, the United States (perhaps understandably) had a different response to North Korea's

nuclear program during the last year than it did for Iraq's suspected chemical and biological weapons programs. This inconsistency may be viewed by other WMD-seeking states as a lack of commitment to its pledge to prevent WMD proliferation. The North Korea case may also lead weaker states to conclude that by acquiring WMD, they also acquire diplomatic strength or bargaining power. The seeking of WMD by weaker states might even be considered to have the deterrent effect of restraining the options of the United States; the more frightening a threat (WMD employment against the United States), the less credible the threat needs to be.⁶⁶ The United States is putting itself into a position in which it is committed to expending a lot of effort and treasure to discover the possible existence of WMD anywhere; any international actor has the ability to cause the United States to needlessly expend its resources by suggesting that it might be interested in acquiring WMD.

2. Customizing Deterrent Threats

Considering the countless differences between the many potential U.S. adversaries, general deterrent threats will not be as effective as specific threats to specific targets. U.S. intelligence needs to focus on gaining an intimate understanding of adversaries such that policy makers will be able to customize U.S. deterrent threats. Each target of deterrence will have something that it holds dear, and determining what that thing is takes knowledge of the adversary's culture, the leaders' psychology and value structure, and the composition of and pressures upon the decision making body or individual.

The United States must not assume that in acting rationally the decision makers of other states will arrive

⁶⁶ Johnson, Mueller and Taft, 20.

at the same conclusions as an American who might weigh costs and benefits when faced with the same deterrence situation. Understanding of culture and values can help to appropriately target an adversary. For example, in fighting the Japanese during World War II, it was vital that U.S. planners understood that those who adhered to the code of Bushido valued honor above survival; likewise, it was unfortunate that President Bush described the War on Terrorism as a crusade without appreciation for the memory that term can invoke in Muslims.

Understanding of the opposing leaders' values is similarly important and should be a target of intelligence. Rational decision-making requires that the adversary weigh the costs and benefits of a particular course of action before making a decision on whether acting or not acting is in its best interest. However, no two parties weigh costs and benefits in the same way. U.S. intelligence needs to provide information that will lead to an understanding of an opponent's value structure so that U.S. policy makers can choose the most appropriate target for a deterrent threat. For example, many leaders might value their ability to remain in power more than the well-being of their citizenries; if that is the case, then economic sanctions might not be appropriate as deterrent threats to these adversaries if their leaders are confident that economic discontent will not lead to their removal from power.

When formulating a strategy of deterrence, it is also important to have an understanding of exactly how decisions are made by the U.S. adversary. Popular opinion within the adversary's state might serve as an excellent pressure point for some, and exerting U.S. influence among

opposition political parties might prove effective with others. Similarly, U.S. policy makers need to understand exactly who makes decisions in an opponent's state in order to effectively make a deterrent threat. As examples, Iran's multifaceted power structure often makes it unclear who speaks on behalf of the state, and since the death of Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, it is debatable how much decision making authority actually lies in the hands of his son, the current President.

3. Reliability of Intelligence

The decision to invade Iraq in March 2003 has been the subject of much debate. Opponents of the decision have pointed to the U.S. military's inability to locate WMD to date. Opponents also suggest that while Iraq might have possessed some capabilities to inflict harm upon U.S. interests, there was no firm evidence that Iraq had any intention of attacking U.S. interests directly or through cooperation with non-state actors. Regardless of what light the separation of years will have on historians' perspectives on the decision to invade, it is clear that the decision to invade, which might be considered the result of a deterrence failure as argued in Chapter V, was the culmination of U.S. strategy toward Iraq and was heavily influenced by the intelligence that U.S. policy makers had at their disposal. Since that intelligence has been called into question to date, policy makers should be aware that the aggressiveness of the new concept of deterrence requires that the U.S. intelligence effort be consistently intense and that the accuracy of intelligence is essential not only for effective deterrence, but also for the suitable infliction of punishment upon a deterrence failure.

B. REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES

1. Capability

There can be little dispute that the armed forces of the United States are the best equipped and trained in the world. Likewise, the United States can leverage among the world's most influential economic, political, informational and diplomatic powers against its foes. Especially if not committed in other contests, the United States has no problem in convincing would-be adversaries that it possesses the capability to inflict harm. However, as elements of the U.S. military are deployed for various commitments around the world, the credibility of the United States reacting to several more deterrence failures or other conflicts simultaneously begins to wane. U.S. policy makers need to be aware that the credibility of deterrent threats might increase due to the United States following through with the deterrent threats it had made (against Iraq, for example), but with each deterrence failure in quick succession, the credibility of U.S. capabilities might decrease due to over-commitment.⁶⁷ By the same token, the commitment of other elements of national power in response to deterrence threats also can decrease in credibility with a series of several deterrence failures; Congress might object to committing more money overseas, or the aggressiveness of U.S. actions might cause it to lose some diplomatic influence among its allies.

2. Communication

In a strategy of deterrence, communication with the U.S. opponent is essential. The U.S. adversary cannot be expected to restrain itself in a deterrence situation if

⁶⁷ George and Smoke, 555.

the threats are not clearly communicated across cultural barriers.⁶⁸ The clarity of communication lends credibility to the threat.⁶⁹ In the absence of clear threats to opponents, the infliction of U.S. punishments in deterrence failures might make the U.S. punishments appear erratic and cause other adversaries to adopt highly defensive postures against perceived random, unpredictable U.S. use of force. A possible problem with current U.S. deterrence efforts is that the deterrent threat is often communicated in language similar to "grave consequences." In the absence of specific threats to adversaries, the adversaries are forced to infer the consequences of their actions based on U.S. military capabilities or past U.S. actions.⁷⁰ In some cases, the inference drawn might be good for U.S. deterrence efforts, as in the case of reflection on the invasion of Iraq, but in other cases, the inferences might be drawn from less fearsome U.S. action, such as the U.S. withdrawal from Somalia. Equally as important as the clear communication of threats is the communication of U.S. concerns, motivations, commitment and intentions.⁷¹ Just as in the case of vague threats, a U.S. failure to communicate exactly what it plans to defend, to what extent and why leaves the opponent to infer U.S. interests and commitment.⁷² While the Bush administration has been fairly clear in communicating the types of behavior it will not tolerate, U.S. concerns, commitment and intentions might still appear uncertain; for example, the United States pledges to fight terrorist organizations and stop the

⁶⁸ Carns, in Manwaring, 9.

⁶⁹ Morgan, 85-86.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 21.

⁷¹ George and Smoke, 52-53.

⁷² Ibid, 565.

proliferation of WMD, but it has not responded with punishment for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka or for North Korea.

Since the success of deterrence depends upon the opponent's rational decision that not acting is more beneficial or less costly than acting, it is also important that the United States communicate assurances that if its opponent behaves agreeably, then the threatened punishment will be withheld. The United States has done a poor job since September 11 in assuring its would-be foes that it will withhold punishment if its opponents fail to act. For example, among other things, the United States objects to Iran's suspected pursuit of nuclear weapons and support for terrorist activity of Hezbollah; however, the United States has given Iran no reason to believe that if it sincerely renounced or stopped the offending activities that the United States would end economic sanctions or cease its support for Iranian opposition movements that aim to overthrow the Iranian government. Iran, therefore, has little incentive to alter its behavior in terms of its relations with the United States. Likewise, although the U.S. strategy toward terrorist organizations might best be described as compellence instead of deterrence, the terrorist organizations should have little confidence that if they completely end all terrorist activities then they will be allowed to exist as social or political organizations by the United States. If a U.S. foe determines it will be punished regardless of what course of action it adopts, then it will pursue a beneficial activity, regardless of the U.S. deterrent threat;

deterrence becomes meaningless without assurance that the threat will be withheld under certain circumstances.⁷³

3. Punishments

In the case of deterrence failures, the United States must be prepared to follow through on its threats of punishment. The more severe the punishment, the more effective the deterrence failure will be in aiding future extended deterrence. Robert J. Art points out that one of the possible reasons for the frequent failure of coercive diplomacy is that the violence inflicted on the U.S. opponent is not harmful enough to cause the opponent to change its policies.⁷⁴ Similarly in deterrence, the opponent must be made to feel that it has something substantial to lose. When offering lesser threats, the United States runs the risk that some opponents might even welcome a limited amount of punishment in order to gather anti-U.S. support around them or to drive a wedge between the United States and its allies.

As argued in Chapter II, due to the nature of deterrence within the NSS, deterrence failures could result from instances short of an attack on the United States or on U.S. interests, and the punishments inflicted as a result of those deterrence failures could take the form of attacks that could be described as preemptive or preventive. This situation puts the United States in a position that might easily be described as that of an

⁷³ For a more detailed presentation of the benefits of assurances in deterrence, see James W. Davis, Jr., *Threats and Promises: The Pursuit of International Influence* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

⁷⁴ For an evaluation of U.S. efforts at "coercive diplomacy" since 1990, see Robert J. Art and Patrick M. Cronin, eds., *The United States and Coercive Diplomacy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003).

aggressor state. For example, there are many Americans who opposed the invasion of Iraq because they did not identify Iraq as a threat to the United States, and many actors in the international arena agreed. Within the framework of the new concept of deterrence as exercised under the NSS, the United States stands the chance of exercising other military attacks as a result of deterrence failures that will not be caused by any attacks upon U.S. interests or by evidence of imminent attacks on U.S. interests; the acquisition of WMD by a would-be foe might be enough for the United States to respond with an attack. The willingness to use force to destroy threats that are not yet fully formed may be a difficult concept for Americans to accept, but U.S. deterrence under the guidelines of the NSS requires that the United States be willing to effect these punishments. Americans may tend to object to U.S. attacks in response to less than fully formed threats because they have been conditioned through the presentation of their history to believe that the U.S. military is employed only in the direct defense of the United States or in defense of a righteous cause. Additionally, a national security strategy, in which the United States is so willing to use force, may have the effect of blurring the distinction between war and deterrence.⁷⁵ Since September 11, U.S. deterrent threats and actions have focused largely on military engagements, but it would be useful if the policy makers include non-military punishments as threats as well.

C. OPPONENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND THE U.S. REPUTATION

U.S. behavior in one deterrence situation or challenge is scrutinized by all potential foes. The credibility of

⁷⁵ I thank Dr. Jeff Knopf for this observation.

the United States inflicting punishment may be low due to numerous instances from the last two decades in which the United States was attacked but did not respond forcefully. As examples, the bombing of the U. S embassy and Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983, the killing of U.S. soldiers in Somalia in 1993, the bombing of the Khobar Towers in 1996, the bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and the attack on the USS Cole in 2000 all resulted in U.S. withdrawals or very limited reprisals. As a result, it is not unreasonable to conclude that foes of the United States might not believe that the United States will respond with force as a result of deterrence failures in the future. The U.S. decisions for military action in Afghanistan and Iraq might serve to enhance the U.S. reputation for using force and serve as a deterrent to other states,⁷⁶ but the reactive nature of these actions in the wake of the attacks of September 11 might just as easily lead U.S. adversaries to conclude that the current U.S. military action is an exception to the general rule of inaction, spurred by the extraordinary circumstances of the September 11 attacks. Persistence in punishment for deterrence failures in the foreseeable future is required to establish the credibility of the U.S. threat and its resolve in opposing terrorism and the proliferation of WMD.⁷⁷

The U.S. demonstration of resolve in Iraq does not necessarily lead other potential foes to conclude that the United States will act similarly in the future. As a democracy, the United States bears the heavy burden of public opinion influencing its freedom of action. As

⁷⁶ Johnson, Mueller and Taft, 17.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 21.

operations in Iraq continue to produce U.S. casualties and cost billions of dollars, Americans who were originally opposed to the invasion might be joined by others who lack the patience to see the rebuilding of Iraq through to its conclusion. The prospect of engaging another foe under similar circumstances in the near term will likely elicit little support from the American public. Negative public opinion in response to an elected official's threat to inflict punishment in a deterrence situation detracts from the credibility of that threat; the U.S. cost of inflicting punishment (in reputation among its allies, in billions of dollars, in the further commitment of a busy military, and in a lack of popular American support) as a result of a deterrence failure is considered by U.S. adversaries in assessing the credibility of U.S. threats.⁷⁸ For example, a U.S. threat to invade an opponent's state made during the fall of 2003 might not be viewed as very credible to the opponent; it seems unlikely that President Bush would willingly commit the U.S. military to an additional campaign while facing some American opposition to current campaigns in an election year unless vital U.S. interests were directly threatened. Conversely, if a U.S. president delivered the U.S. threat in such a way as to stake his political career on delivering the punishment in the case of a deterrence failure, the threat's credibility increases; there would be high costs for U. S policy makers if they did not effect the punishment.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Morgan, 94.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 115.

CHAPTER V. DETERRENCE FAILURE: IRAQ 2001-2003

A. POST-GULF WAR DETERRENCE SITUATION

On March 20, 2003 the armed forces of the United States began a deliberate attack into the sovereign territory of Iraq. This action might be considered the culmination of the 1991 Gulf War, continued through OPERATION NORTHERN WATCH and OPERATION SOUTHERN WATCH throughout the 1990s and into the 21st century; or it might be considered the failure of an ongoing U.S. policy of coercive diplomacy; or it might be considered the measured elimination of an enemy with whom the United States had irreconcilable differences. For the purpose of this study, the invasion of Iraq is framed as a deterrence failure. While it might be argued that the nature of the U.S. demands on Iraq might make the relationship better characterized as compellence, that compellence, in the form of demands for disarmament and the admittance of United Nations (UN) weapons inspectors, was required as a result of the intrusive parameters set by the United States on its new deterrence situation with Iraq after September 11, 2001. The Iraqi case is instructive in that it demonstrates the forward-leaning practice of the new concept of deterrence, which may be required in future cases dealing with an opponent's acquisition of WMD, as opposed to the more traditional, passive practice of deterrence.

U.S. relations with Iraq can be considered to have been relatively hostile since the end of the Gulf War. The 12 years that elapsed between the end of OPERATION DESERT STORM and the beginning of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM might be

framed as a period in which the United States practiced a strategy of deterrence against Iraq. The United States, mostly through the formalities of UNSCRs, presented an explanation of behaviors that the United States considered unacceptable, such as unauthorized activity in the northern and southern no-fly zones. The United States offered a threat of military retaliation for violations of these unacceptable behaviors. The United States demonstrated its intent and resolve by forward deploying military forces within rapid striking distance of Iraq. Upon violations of unacceptable behavior, or deterrence failures, the United States delivered the punishment that was promised in the event of Iraqi violations. In most cases, the punishment inflicted by the United States was not answered by any Iraqi retaliation, so state-level relations reverted back to a nearly identical deterrence situation. This cycle was repeated numerous times during the first 10 years of hostility with few cases of escalated violence or tension between the United States and Iraq. The relationship between the United States and Iraq was one of traditional deterrence; the United States punished Iraq generally only in cases in which Iraq displayed hostile, military behavior that the United States had specifically forbid.

After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and the publication of the 2001 QDR, the U.S. conception of deterrence changed. The cycle of Iraqi violation, U.S. punishment, lack of Iraqi retaliation, and return to U.S. readiness continued, but the tenor of the deterrence situation began to change. Over time, the United States decided that the 1990s' deterrence framework needed to evolve in response to a new U.S. geopolitical outlook. The Bush administration perceived that the United States was

threatened by a WMD attack, delivered by uncertain state or non-state actors. In the case of Iraq, the United States and the UN had constructed a "box" within which Iraqi behavior would be restrained after OPERATION DESERT STORM; activity within the box was acceptable to the United States, and activity outside the box was unacceptable to the United States. For example, Iraqi activity in the no-fly zones was outside the box; Iraqi harboring of the *Mujahedin-e Khalq* was within the box.

B. PARAMETERS OF THE NEW DETERRENCE SITUATION

Beginning in late 2001, the United States began redesigning a smaller box for Iraqi behavior. This new box would be used as the measure by which the United States determined if Iraq was successfully deterred or if Iraq was due a punishment. However, while the new U.S. concept of deterrence, itself, was not necessarily faulty, there were several problems with the conduct of deterrence on the part of the United States that suggest there was little chance for a strategy of deterrence to work against Iraq after September 2001. First, the United States was slow in clearly communicating what behavior it expected Iraq to avoid, and the U.S. expectations evolved over the course of the 18 months between September 11, 2001 and the invasion of Iraq. The United States did not communicate a specific threat to Iraq describing the consequences of failing to be deterred until a few months before the invasion. U.S. resolve was difficult to ascertain due to more than a decade of hostile U.S. rhetoric and relatively modest U.S. action. U.S. credibility was called into question because it displayed a necessity to work with the international community and because its policy toward North Korea's nuclear program demonstrated a lack of consistency.

Finally, the United States gave no assurance that if Iraq's behavior complied with the desires of the United States, it would not be attacked.

1. Communication of the Deterrence Situation

Prior to September 2001, the United States publicly supported external Iraqi opposition movements, it publicly supported insurgent activity of Iraqi Kurds, it publicly mentioned the desirability of regime change in Iraq since at least 1998,⁸⁰ and it regularly attacked Iraqi defenses that directly or indirectly endangered U.S. air operations over Iraq. However, while it was clear to Iraq that the United States did not approve of Iraq's government in general, the specific threats of U.S. military action and instances in which military action was delivered were limited to responses to Iraqi violations of a relatively clear cut set of guidelines, laid out in UNSCRs. The question of Iraqi possession of WMD was not central to U.S. military activity in and around Iraq. The UN weapons inspection team left Iraq in 1998, and the United States launched OPERATION DESERT FOX, seemingly as a punishment for Iraq violating its agreement to allow inspections under UNSC 687. However, after the U.S. attack, no further U.S. action was taken, yet Iraq did not revert back to its adherence of its agreement to allow inspections; Iraq stepped outside its box, and it failed to get back within its box after the U.S. punishment, yet the United States allowed this behavior. From 1998 to 2001, the United States might have implemented a strategy of compellence to force Iraq to accept weapons inspections, but instead, Iraq

⁸⁰ U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, Iraq Liberation Act of 1998 (January 27, 1998), Section 3 <<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?c105:4:./temp/~c105xMNBRO::>> Accessed December 12, 2003.

enjoyed a victory in sustaining a U.S. punishment but gaining freedom of action.

In the fall of 2001, the United States entered into a new deterrence situation with Iraq. After sustaining the attacks of September 11, the Bush administration was struck by the realization of the possibility of a WMD attack on the United States. The attitude of the Bush administration on the possession and acquisition of WMD by its foes and potential foes was clearly expressed in the NSS a year later, but in September 2001, the implied message to Iraq was, "do not use your WMD against the United States or its interests and do not proliferate your WMD to third parties." A problem with the deterrence situation during fall 2001 was that the United States left its description of unacceptable behavior open to inference by Iraq and that the United States did not communicate the consequences of an Iraqi decision to acquire more WMD or to share WMD with third parties (an actual Iraqi WMD attack would constitute an act of war, so no communication of consequences was necessary for that eventuality). A lack of clear communication of U.S. demands required that Iraq determine what acceptable behavior was and what would be the likely U.S. response to unacceptable behavior.

The United States had perhaps disapproved of additional international parties acquiring WMD until 2001, but as argued in Chapter II, the stance adopted by the Bush administration of not allowing any anti-U.S. international actors to use WMD or acquire or attempt to acquire WMD or its precursor materials was clearly a change from previous U.S. policy. A problem with the new Iraqi deterrence situation was that the U.S. "compellent" demand that Iraq allow weapons inspectors back into its territory was not

accompanied by the communication that the United States had changed its stance on the possession of WMD or the communication that the United States was willing to invade Iraq if Iraq did not give the United States indisputable assurances that it did not possess WMD. The United States redesigned Iraq's box such that Iraq would not only be prevented from possessing any WMD, but also that it must disprove U.S. intelligence reports that concluded that Iraq had WMD; due to the heavy reliance on intelligence in the new deterrence situation, Iraq was presumed guilty until it proved itself innocent. But, based on the previous, known U.S. complicity with Iraqi possession of WMD, Iraq had no reason to conclude that its failure to disprove U.S. intelligence could lead to war.

By way of contrast to the lack of clear U.S. communication of its stance on Iraqi WMD, on October 9, 2001, U.S. Ambassador to the UN, John Negroponte, informed his Iraqi counterpart that Iraq would be attacked and defeated if it tried to take advantage of U.S. distraction with the war in Afghanistan and conduct military action against its neighbors.⁸¹ Since the United States was not so clear about its expectations and consequences for Iraq concerning WMD, one of the first post-September 11 inferences on U.S. intent for Iraq came from Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz who stated on October 28, 2001 that he was aware that it was only a matter of time before Iraq was attacked by the United States as part of the war on terrorism.⁸² Similar statements from 'Aziz and Saddam Hussein, particularly concerning the readiness of the Iraqi

⁸¹ Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 56 (Winter 2002): 145.

⁸² Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 56 (Spring 2002): 310.

people to repel the American invaders, can be found in press releases from throughout the winter, spring and summer of 2002; these statements show that in the absence of clear communication from Washington, Baghdad expected the worst possible punishment, but for an unspecified behavior. The threat of invasion and regime change might have seemed to Iraq too drastic an endeavor for the United States, particularly considering that U.S. rhetoric in 2001 and 2002 sounded very similar to U.S. rhetoric during 1991-2001; the lack of clear communication about the shift in the U.S. perception of the WMD threat perhaps made the non-specific U.S. addresses after September 2001 unworthy of serious consideration by Iraq.

The following sample of the U.S. presentation of the new deterrence situation shows its ambiguity.

- President Bush on November 26, 2001 urged Iraq to allow UN weapons inspections in order to prove that Iraq had no WMD, and he suggested that Iraq might be the next target of the war on terrorism;⁸³ however, the link between weapons inspections and war was not clearly delivered.
- In his State of the Union Address of January 29, 2002, President Bush referenced Iraq and WMD and stated, "America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security...The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons."⁸⁴ Again, the United States expressed

⁸³ Ibid, 311.

⁸⁴ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, The President's State of the Union Address, The United States Capitol, Washington, D.C., January 29, 2002 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

concern over WMD, but it still had not clearly communicated the new deterrence situation.

- Similarly, on March 13, 2002, President Bush left the consequences of Iraqi defiance vague with his statement that "all options are on the table," and the requirement for Iraq to disclose its weapons information and allow inspectors into Iraq was left suggestive rather than imperative: "one thing I will not allow is a nation such as Iraq to threaten our very future by developing weapons of mass destruction. They've agreed not to have those weapons; they ought to conform to their agreement, comply with their agreement."⁸⁵

The United States expended most of its efforts during first half of 2002 in making an argument to numerous states that Iraq posed a serious threat to the international community and that its violations of UNSCRs warranted a strong international response. The Bush administration repeatedly stated that it would consult with other states prior to taking any military action against Iraq, but it never presented the specific case(s) in which the United States would find it necessary to act.

It was not until President Bush's September 12, 2002 address to the UN General Assembly that the United States finally stated its specific demands of Iraq, which basically constituted a formal demand that Iraq comply with all provisions of UNSCRs 686, 687 and 688.

If all these steps are taken, it will signal a new openness and accountability in Iraq. And it

⁸⁵ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Press Conference by the President, The James S. Brady Briefing Room, March 13, 2002 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/03/20020313-8.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

could open the prospect of the United Nations helping to build a government that represents all Iraqis -- a government based on respect for human rights, economic liberty, and internationally supervised elections...the purposes of the United States should not be doubted. The Security Council resolutions will be enforced -- the just demands of peace and security will be met -- or action will be unavoidable. And a regime that has lost its legitimacy will also lose its power.⁸⁶

The situation was framed as Iraq must comply with all applicable UNSCRs or the United States will enforce the UNSCRs with the result of regime change in Baghdad. However, almost as soon as the United States clearly stated its desired Iraqi behavior and its threat of punishment in the case of non-compliance, the United States began to change the parameters of the situation. Even before President Bush's address to the UN General Assembly, the Bush administration had indicated that a return to an inspections regime was unacceptable; on August 26, 2002 Vice President Cheney commented on the futility of inspections in Iraq:

Saddam has perfected the game of cheat and retreat, and is very skilled in the art of denial and deception. A return of inspectors would provide no assurance whatsoever of his compliance with UN resolutions. On the contrary, there is a great danger that it would provide false comfort that Saddam was somehow "back in his box."⁸⁷

Similarly, President Bush stated on September 14, 2002, "Congress must make it unmistakably clear that when it

⁸⁶ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Remarks by the President in Address to the United Nations General Assembly, New York, NY, September 12, 2002 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

⁸⁷ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Remarks by the Vice President to the Veterans of Foreign Wars 103rd National Convention, August 26, 2002 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/08/20020826.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

comes to confronting the growing danger posed by Iraq's efforts to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction, the status quo is totally unacceptable."⁸⁸ President Bush clarified his intent on September 23, 2002 when he explained that he wanted a UNSCR "which will allow freedom-loving countries to disarm Saddam Hussein before he threatens his neighborhood, before he threatens freedom, before he threatens America and before he threatens civilization."⁸⁹ By October 2, 2002, the demand on Iraq became clear: "Saddam must disarm, period. If, however, he chooses to do otherwise, if he persists in his defiance, the use of force may become unavoidable."⁹⁰

It had taken roughly one year for U.S. communications to proceed from an implication that "Iraq must not use WMD against the United States" (deterrence) to a demand that "Iraq must prove that it does not have WMD" (compellence in support of deterrence) to the imperative that "Iraq must disarm" (compellence). Before the beginning of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM almost six months later, the U.S. stance had evolved even further from a demand that Iraq could understand and comply with regarding weapons to the final U.S. demand that Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave

⁸⁸ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Radio Address by the President to the Nation, September 14, 2002 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020914.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

⁸⁹ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "President Bush Calls on Congress to Act on Nation's Priorities," Army National Guard Aviation Support Facility, Trenton, NJ, September 23, 2002 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020923-2.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

⁹⁰ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "President, House Leadership Agree on Iraq Resolution," The Rose Garden, October 2, 2002 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021002-7.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

Iraq within 48 hours if war was to be avoided.⁹¹ Between September 11, 2001 and March 20, 2003, the United States was very slow in communicating its demands to Iraq, and after communications became clear in September 2002, Iraq's box of acceptable behavior became smaller and smaller until Saddam Hussein's only chance to avoid war was his abdication.

2. Communication of the Threat

The communication of the results of an Iraqi failure to comply with U.S. demands was similarly slow in getting to clarity, but once the threat was finally made clear, the only problem with the communication of the threat remained the timetable for Iraqi compliance. Unlike the above cited statement of Ambassador Negroponte regarding the U.S. threat to attack and defeat Iraq if it attacked its neighbors, the United States not only failed to clearly and consistently threaten invasion and regime change as a result of Iraq's failure to comply with U.S. demands, but its method of pushing the requirement for Iraqi compliance further and further into the future served to assure Iraq that war was neither being planned (initially) nor would result from noncompliance.

President Bush first vaguely expressed in January 2002 that the United States would "do what is necessary" to protect itself from an Iraqi threat.⁹² Then he showed the indecision of the United States in how it would respond to Iraq defiance in March 2002 by stating that "all options

⁹¹ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation, The Cross Hall, March 17, 2003 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/03/20030317-7.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

⁹² The White House, The President's 2002 State of the Union Address.

are on the table."⁹³ He then proceeded to repeatedly state that the United States would consult with other countries before taking any action. Before the UN General Assembly in September 2002, he offered the more menacing threat that "action will be unavoidable" if Iraq does not abide by UNSCRs.⁹⁴ But then 20 days later, he reduced the connection between Iraqi noncompliance and U.S. action by stating that "if [Saddam Hussein] persists in his defiance, the use of force *may* become unavoidable" (emphasis added).⁹⁵ As President Bush signed the U.S. Congress resolution granting him the authority to use force against Iraq on October 16, 2002, he again clarified the threat of use of force with, "Either the Iraqi regime will give up its weapons of mass destruction, or, for the sake of peace, the United States will lead a global coalition to disarm that regime."⁹⁶ After October 16, the United States remained consistent in communicating its threat of war as a result of the failure of Iraq to disarm, giving Iraq five months during which clear U.S. communications existed prior to war.

Not only was the United States slow in seriously threatening Iraq with invasion, but also it denied suggestions (which could have served to lend credibility to its deterrent, then "compellent," threat of military action) that it was preparing for war. In November 2001, Secretary of State Colin Powell denied speculations that

⁹³ The White House, The President's March 13, 2002 Press Conference.

⁹⁴ The White House, The President's September 12, 2002 Address to the UN General Assembly.

⁹⁵ The White House, "President, House Leadership Agree on Iraq Resolution."

⁹⁶ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, "President Signs Iraq Resolution," The East Room, October 16, 2002 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021016-1.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

the United States was preparing for an attack on Iraq.⁹⁷ Even after President Bush's address to the UN General Assembly, Secretary Rumsfeld denied that the U.S. and British destruction of Iraqi air defense systems beginning on September 16, 2002 constituted a preparation for war.⁹⁸ Similarly, Secretary Powell, rather than emphasizing the U.S. readiness to strike Iraq, stated that the military buildup in the Persian Gulf at the end of December 2002 did not make war inevitable.⁹⁹

The aversion of the Bush administration for declaring that formal war preparations were underway may have harmed the chances for obtaining Iraqi compliance. Similarly, the Bush administration's failure to specify a definitive deadline for compliance soon after communications were clarified also may have reduced the chances for obtaining Iraqi compliance. After declaring in September 2002 that a failure to disarm would result in war, the United States delayed action by seeking a UNSCR to support military action against Iraq. The desired resolution of November 8, 2002, UNSCR 1441, demanded that Iraq provide immediate, unimpeded unrestricted access for weapons inspections or face serious consequences, but upon Iraq's presenting an incomplete or erroneous weapons declaration to the UN and its resisting the efforts of the UN weapons inspection team, the United States simply restated its objections, restated its demands, and restated its threat. The United States began staging forces for war, but it was not clear

⁹⁷ Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 56 (Spring 2002): 311.

⁹⁸ Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 57 (Winter 2003): 139.

⁹⁹ Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 57 (Spring 2003): 304.

when Iraq's last chance to comply would be. On January 14, 2003 President Bush said, "Time is running out on Saddam Hussein. He must disarm. I'm sick and tired of games and deception. And that's my view of timetables."¹⁰⁰ After numerous other statements from the Bush administration that indicated that time was running out for Saddam Hussein, President Bush seemingly leaned forward toward war on February 6, 2003, the day after Secretary Powell addressed the UN Security Council with his evidence of Iraq's UNSCR violations and general threat to the world: "Saddam Hussein will be stopped."¹⁰¹

While the tenor of U.S. messages during the five months leading up to OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM was indicative of U.S. intentions and the U.S. message was finally made relatively clear and consistent, the forum for the deterrence/compellence situation was one of delay. The "compellent" demands of the United States were left open-ended while the United States sought the support of the international community for military action through diplomacy in the UN, with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and with individual states. Other than the deployment of military force to the region, Iraq was given little indication that its situation became graver between October 2002 and February 2003; U.S. reiterations that time was running out and Iraq must disarm did not have the same finality as a deadline for compliance might have.

¹⁰⁰ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Remarks by President Bush and Polish President Kwasniewski in Photo Opportunity, The Oval Office, January 14, 2003 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030114-2.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

¹⁰¹ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, Statement by the President, February 6, 2003 <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030206-17.html>> Accessed November 18, 2003.

3. Resolve and Credibility

Although the Bush administration took 18 months to complete its move toward war with Iraq, its rhetoric indicated that it intended to remove the threat of Saddam Hussein's Iraq through peaceful or violent means. However, its resolve in remaining dedicated to the confrontation and its credibility in delivering the threats it promised were reduced by 11 years of hostile U.S. rhetoric and relatively little U.S. action. The relationship that the United States had built with Iraq since the end of OPERATION DESERT STORM was one in which Iraq was contained, but it was not required to comply with all U.S. demands. The United States routinely inflicted punishment on Iraq for violations, but there were no serious consequences for Iraq; Iraq absorbed air attacks on its defense infrastructure and may have even grown numb to frequent U.S. punishments, and economic sanctions on Iraq evidently did not cause pain for Iraq's leaders or jeopardize their hold on power. In order to be successful, the Bush administration had to make it clear to Iraq's leadership that the situation had changed and that the United States expected full compliance or it would unseat the government through war. Even considering that U.S. communications with Iraq were less than ideal during the 18 months prior to war, Iraq failed to recognize some indicators that U.S. threats were credible and U.S. resolve was steady and consistent. Although the United States was not successful in peacefully settling the conflict with Iraq, its behavior during the confrontation might lend credibility to future deterrence situations.

The U.S. decision to work within international forums proved to be a double-edged sword. The failure of the UN

to enforce its UNSCRs since the end of the 1991 Gulf War made it questionable whether it was an appropriate forum to exert pressure on Iraq in 2002 and 2003. Iraq had every reason to believe that lack of international consensus and resolve would result in more inaction toward its defiance of UNSCRs. Additionally, the opposition of traditional U.S. partners and allies, such as France and Germany, to the U.S. bias for action against Iraq in the UN gave weight to an Iraqi belief that while trying to obtain the consent of the UN, the United States would not succeed in gathering approval for military action. Although the Bush administration repeatedly declared that it would consult with other states prior to acting in Iraq but it would not be restrained by lack of consensus, the United States continued to exert a lot of effort in the UN through February 2003; it might have been difficult for Iraq to believe that the United States would act in defiance of UN consensus while the United States continued to seemingly restrain itself with the UN until the final weeks of the confrontation.

However, the Bush administration's much publicized activity within the international arena also should have lent credibility to U.S. demands and threats. By repeatedly stating its demands and threats and repeatedly stating that the United States would act alone if necessary in international forums, the Bush administration was making the costs of not fulfilling its promises very high; in the absence of eventual U.S. action, all states would witness that the U.S. threats of punishment were empty promises.

The threat of war by the United States, a democracy, inherently lacked some credibility because war is extremely costly in lives of represented citizens and state resources

and it could be costly politically for the Bush administration. The United States developed a bad reputation for staying power in the face of war casualties during the previous two decades. Additionally, U.S. military operations in Afghanistan made it questionable if the United States would be willing to undertake another major military operation simultaneously. However, as in the case of the international arena, the Bush administration's statements to its domestic audience might have made it too costly for it to not act; after stating that Saddam Hussein cannot be allowed to stay in power, it would have been politically costly if he was still in power and defiant during the 2004 election. Furthermore, President Bush's acquisition of a Congress resolution to use force against Iraq if necessary should have demonstrated to the Iraqi leadership that President Bush had domestic support for action.

Finally, simultaneous U.S. policy in cases apart from Iraq was also both detrimental and beneficial to U.S. credibility. The U.S. policy toward North Korea's nuclear program showed that not all states in possession of WMD would be treated identically by the United States, making the U.S. stance toward Iraq less credible; it was questionable whether or not the United States would go to war over WMD in Iraq while not even considering war over WMD in North Korea. Iraq noted this discrepancy in U.S. policy on December 31, 2002.¹⁰² Conversely, U.S. action in Afghanistan in 2001 served as a demonstration that the United States was willing to take decisive military action against foes it considered to threaten the security of the

¹⁰² Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 57 (Spring 2003): 306.

United States. However, as early as December 2001, Secretary Powell indicated that success in Afghanistan should not suggest success in Iraq since the situations were different and Iraq's military was far superior to that of the Taliban.¹⁰³

4. Assurances

The United States never gave Iraq assurances that if it complied with all U.S. demands then it would not be attacked. The United States attempted to gain support for military action against Iraq throughout the first half of 2002, months before it ever clearly communicated its demands and threats to Iraq; the United States contemplated military action against Iraq before the United States suggested to Iraq that punishment would come if Iraq refused to comply with renewed demands for admittance of UN weapons inspectors. By seeking international support for military action before insisting that Iraq comply with UNSCRs, the United States showed that it expected that its demands were not going to be met. When Tariq 'Aziz suggested in October 2001 that it was only a matter of time until the United States attacked Iraq as part of its war on terrorism, the United States did not dispel his fears; rather, the Bush administration stated that war with Iraq was not *imminent* in 2001.¹⁰⁴

Similarly, after initial, but vague, communications of the new deterrence situation to Iraq during spring 2002, the Bush administration indicated that even if Iraq accepted weapons inspectors back into its territory, the Iraqi WMD threat would still remain due to Iraqi deception.

¹⁰³ Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 56 (Spring 2002): 311.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

If the WMD threat was what the United States would not tolerate, then Iraqi compliance with U.S. demands for weapons inspections would not serve to remove U.S. insecurity; although the United States threatened punishment only if Iraq did not disarm, it was clear that the United States maintained that Iraq could not be compelled to disarm simply with the re-admittance of weapons inspectors. Therefore, the U.S. demand for renewed inspections was meaningless for Iraq. Iraq had no incentive to comply with U.S. demands because the situation was framed such that there was no way to avoid U.S. punishment: the United States told Iraq that it must disarm; the United States insisted that disarmament could only be conducted with Iraq's full cooperation with weapons inspectors; however, the United States maintained that weapons inspectors could not ensure disarmament because Iraq was always suspected of deception and obstruction; therefore, the United States offered no way for Iraq to prove that it had disarmed. If U.S. punishment would be contingent on proving whether or not Iraq had disarmed, then Iraq had no reason to cooperate with weapons inspectors because in the eyes of the United States, it would be unable to prove it had no WMD with or without the presence of inspectors. Iraq had reason to believe that if the U.S. threat proved credible, the punishment would come in a matter of time, regardless of Iraqi responses to U.S. demands.

While Iraqi activity was arguably obstructionist on the matter of WMD throughout the 18 months of confrontation, it should be noted that it offered some overtures and made some concessions in hope of avoiding war. For example, on March 25, 2002, Baghdad announced it

was ready to receive a U. S team (with conditions) to investigate the fate of an American pilot shot down during OPERATION DESERT STORM as a gesture of goodwill;¹⁰⁵ similarly, on December 8, 2002, Saddam Hussein apologized to the Kuwaiti people for Iraq's 1990 invasion.¹⁰⁶ In terms of Iraqi concessions directly related to WMD, Iraq allowed a limited, four-day inspection of a former research center near Baghdad by the International Atomic Energy Agency in January 2002;¹⁰⁷ on September 16, 2002, Iraq announced that it would unconditionally allow the return of weapons inspectors (although it then proceeded to argue for conditions);¹⁰⁸ on October 1 Iraq agreed to drop almost all restrictions on inspections, except for the inspection of eight presidential palaces,¹⁰⁹ but after the arrival of the inspection team on November 26, the inspectors were granted access to palaces on December 3;¹¹⁰ Iraq delivered a weapons disclosure report, as required by the UN (but it was widely believed to be incomplete and misleading);¹¹¹ on December 22 Iraqi General 'Amir Sa'adi invited Central Intelligence Agency agents to accompany UN weapons inspectors;¹¹² on December 27 and 28 Iraq provided a list of scientists, who had once worked on banned weapons programs, to the inspection team (but the list was believed to be incomplete), and Iraq agreed to allow interviews of these

¹⁰⁵ Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 56 (Summer 2002): 501.

¹⁰⁶ Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 57 (Summer 2003): 303.

¹⁰⁷ Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 56 (Summer 2002): 500.

¹⁰⁸ Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 57 (Winter 2003): 139.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 140.

¹¹⁰ Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 57 (Spring 2003): 303.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid, 305.

scientists outside of Iraq (but it was believed that the scientists were coerced into not cooperating);¹¹³ Iraq finally agreed to allow one scientist to be interviewed without a government witness on February 6, 2003 (but again, coercion was suspected);¹¹⁴ on February 14 Saddam Hussein issued a decree banning the construction or importation of WMD (although it was not accepted as sincere), and Iraq allowed for surveillance flights in conjunction with inspections;¹¹⁵ and on March 2, Iraq destroyed its banned *al-Samoud* 2 missiles, in accordance with a UN deadline.¹¹⁶ However, for each concession made by Iraq, the U.S. response was that the Iraqi concession was not sincere and did not constitute full compliance with UNSCRs (and Iraq repeatedly rejected demands for renewed weapons inspections until fall 2002 and Iraq made war preparations throughout the 18 months of confrontation). The Bush administration also indicated that the Iraqi concessions were simply aimed at buying more time. Rather than taking a step-by-step diplomatic approach with Iraq, the United States threats were based on an all-or-nothing demand. In view of U.S. dissatisfaction with each Iraqi concession, Iraq might have concluded that the United States would eventually attack, regardless of how completely it complied with UNSCRs.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Editorial Staff, "Chronology: Iraq," *The Middle East Journal* 57 (Summer 2003): 481.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 482.

¹¹⁶ Ibid,

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CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

A. DETERRENCE AS A VIABLE STRATEGY

The Bush administration's outlook on the security challenges facing the United States is influenced by the attacks of September 11. In light of the reality that enemies of the United States can catastrophically strike at U.S. interests despite U.S. military might, forward presence and global reach, despite U.S. economic strength, despite U.S. information superiority, and despite U.S. diplomatic influence and power, the Bush administration reassessed its security strategy; the Bush administration is determined that further attacks on the magnitude of those of September 11 will not be allowed to succeed. The danger of WMD use by U.S. adversaries especially captures the attention of President Bush.

Although the Bush administration does not totally abandon the use of deterrence as a national strategy, deterrence, when conceived of as promised retaliation in response to an opponent's attack, is not an acceptable option for those states and non-state actors which might use WMD against the United States. Traditional concepts of deterrence make the assumption that no action will be taken on the part of the United States if its opponent does not first attack the United States. In the past, the likelihood that an enemy of the United States, other than the Soviet Union, could successfully carry out an attack on the United States was minimal, the threat of U.S. retaliation was terrifying, and the international actors that needed to be deterred consisted only of nation-states; although the Soviet Union had the ability to attack the

United States with nuclear weapons, it might be argued that the concept of MAD made the results of a deterrence failure so horrific that deterrence failures were seldom seriously considered. Today, the unwillingness of the Bush administration to endure attacks of any kind on the United States requires either that deterrence be abandoned as a strategy (because it cannot guarantee that all attacks will be prevented) or that a new concept of deterrence be adopted.¹¹⁷ A new concept of deterrence is compatible with the Bush administration's bias for action in the face of threats that are not yet completely formed (such as the fledgling WMD programs of potential U.S. enemies), and it is useful in filling the U.S. gap between threat recognition and preemptive or preventive attacks.¹¹⁸

While they appear to be radically offensive departures from previous national security ideas, the concepts of preventive war and preemption are not stand-alone concepts in the realm of national security; these concepts (and the Bush administration's apparent willingness to employ them) should be considered two of many threats available for the United States to offer to its opponents while pursuing a strategy of deterrence. Just as in traditional concepts of deterrence in which the United States would attack its opponent only after it was first attacked, in a new concept of deterrence, preemption and preventive war would occur only in cases of deterrence failures.

¹¹⁷ For President Bush's reservations on the applicability of a strategy of deterrence to today's threats of WMD attacks, rogue states and terrorist attacks, see President Bush's quote on Page 2 of this paper or see NSS, 5-7, 13-16.

¹¹⁸ See National Security Advisor Rice's quote on exhausting all other means prior to preemptive action on Page 3 of this paper.

A useful concept of deterrence for today's security environment is one in which the United States, as in the case of traditional concepts of deterrence, still presents to an opponent a situation in which the United States threatens a particular action only as a result of a particular behavior on the part of its opponent: "if you do A, the United States will do B." However, while traditional concepts of deterrence would suggest that A equates to some form of attack on the United States and B equates to retaliation of some sort, a new concept of deterrence offers the flexibility to define A as some activity short of an attack (such as the attempted acquisition of WMD) and B, therefore, as a preemptive, rather than retaliatory, attack. In addition to deterrence by punishment, the United States should also maintain the concepts of deterrence by denial and positive deterrence in its "deterrence toolbox."¹¹⁹

The basic dynamics of the relationship between opponents in the new concept of deterrence remain the same as those in traditional concepts of deterrence. No concept of deterrence is foolproof and there are many potential pitfalls to avoid if deterrence is to succeed. Similarly, there are several key elements to observe in pursuit of successful deterrence, such as clear and timely U.S. communication of the activity to be avoided and the threatened punishment, demonstration of U.S. resolve and

¹¹⁹ The NSS suggests that deterrence will be ineffective against rogue states and terrorist networks. While this paper suggests that deterrence might be effective across the spectrum of threats and actors, the specific requirements for successfully employing deterrence against these actors is beyond its scope. For the prospect of deterrence against terrorist networks, see Davis and Jenkins. For the prospect of deterrence against rogue states, see the spring 2004 Naval Postgraduate School thesis of Jamie Calabrese.

credibility, and assurances that punishment will be withheld if the opponent chooses to be deterred.

B. COMMUNICATING DETERRENCE PARAMETERS VERSUS WAR MONGERING

Clear communication between opponents is essential in any concept of deterrence. In today's security environment of uncertain but substantial threats being developed in secret, the Bush administration is faced with the prospect of necessarily appearing overbearing and aggressive within the international community if the new concept of deterrence is to be successful. The Bush administration must clearly threaten punishment specifically to those international actors which it fears may develop the capability to harm the United States with WMD, for example. In issuing these threats, the United States might be viewed as war mongering by its friends and allies (as well as by ambivalent actors and foes); the United States could lose the support of traditionally sympathetic states, and the result among its foes might be the development of escalation through spiral dynamics. However, the United States cannot expect to avoid the necessity of preemptive attacks or preventive war if its foes are not made to clearly understand that their development of a threatening capacity toward the United States and its interests will result in punishment by the United States, even in the absence of hostile action. In order to minimize opposition to U.S. deterrence efforts, U.S. diplomatic efforts must work to convince the international community that the security challenges it seeks to deter are significant and credible through some intelligence sharing. It must also provide assurances, both for the incentive of the opponent and for the reduction of an aggressive U.S. image in the

international eye, that in the absence of threat development, the United States does not intend to strike. The Iraq case shows the importance of clear communication of the parameters of the deterrence situation not only for the opponent, but also for U.S. reputation. The U.S. reputation for assurances and predictable behavior might have been damaged through the Iraq case because the United States for many months indicated that its requirement was disarmament through renewed weapons inspections; by attacking despite the renewal of weapons inspections, the United States gives the appearance that it will not observe its part of the deterrence bargain that the United States will only do *B* if the opponent does *A*. In the future, the United States must ensure that its clear communication of the deterrence parameters leave all parties (opponents and observers) with no doubts that the United States intends to act exactly *and only* as it threatens.

C. THE INTELLIGENCE DILEMMA

While in traditional concepts of deterrence accurate intelligence is required in order to determine the opponent's intent, capability and vulnerabilities, the new concept of deterrence necessarily relies even more on accurate intelligence because the United States proposes to act militarily in some cases in which no overtly hostile action had been demonstrated on the part of its opponent. In the case of the U.S. concern about WMD threats, the United States might demand that its foes do not possess, use, distribute or attempt to acquire WMD or WMD precursor material under threat of U.S. military action. U.S. intelligence efforts are instrumental in monitoring the deterrence situation and in determining when U.S. action is appropriate; the United States refuses to absorb an attack

before acting, so intelligence must show when an enemy attack is possible or imminent. Intelligence is never complete or completely accurate, so there is always the possibility that the U.S. estimate of its opponent's WMD threat is overstated. Therefore, as in the case of Iraq, if an opponent is to avoid a U.S. attack as a result of the U.S. perception that the opponent chose not to be deterred (it acquired WMD), then the opponent must disprove the suspected activity estimated by U.S. intelligence. As a result, if the United States hopes to avoid war, its deterrence situation must evolve into a compellence situation, in which the opponent is forced to provide evidence that it has not violated the U.S. demand that it not acquire WMD.

In the case of Iraq, the compellence situation was grounded in UNSCRs, so the United States had justification to demand that Iraq prove it had no banned weapons. However, if the United States is to use this same demand against other would-be WMD armed opponents, the compellence situation becomes problematic. If there is no regime for WMD monitoring of an opponent, extracting proof from the opponent that it does not have WMD may involve a violation of or an affront to its sovereignty. If the opponent refuses to allow for the intrusive, "compellent" demand that it provides proof of its lack of WMD, then the United States is forced to make a decision on whether or not to punish the opponent based on its own intelligence. Unfortunately, the current lack of significant indications of WMD presence in Iraq makes the prospect of doling out punishments based on suspicion of obtaining WMD risky for the United States. The United States will have to be concerned of lack of popular support for military action

based on possibly flawed or "hyped" intelligence in both international and domestic audiences. Similarly, the example of the Iraq invasion might show opponents that compliance with U.S. demands for proof of their lack of WMD will not be convincing enough for the United States to decide against military action anyway.

The United States can employ a new concept of deterrence to meet the threats of the current security environment, but it must be willing to be as aggressive in its language to and treatment of its potential foes as the NSS implies the United States will be when faced with a threat from WMD. Additionally, while all situations within the international security environment must be addressed individually,¹²⁰ in those cases in which the United States decides to employ a strategy of deterrence, it is vital to U.S. credibility that the United States acts in the case of deterrence failures, in accordance with the threats it communicates.

¹²⁰ For example, the case of North Korea's suspected acquisition of nuclear weapons presented a much different case than Iraq's suspected maintenance of WMD; there is no standard solution to all WMD-related security challenges. So, in the interest of maintaining its credibility and resolve, it is best that the United States not attempt a strategy of general deterrence with regards to WMD acquisition.

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